

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 WINNIP 00256 122250Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /069 W

-----027320 130239Z /73

R 122330Z JUL 77

FM AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1944

ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA (BY POUCH)

UNCLAS WINNIPEG 256

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, CA

SUBJ: NATIONAL UNITY--STILL NOT A PRAIRIE PREOCCUPATION

REF: OTTAWA 5944

1. SUMMARY. EVEN WITH LAUNCHING OF NATIONAL UNITY DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT, PEOPLE ON THE CANADIAN PRAIRIE ARE NOT PREOCCUPIED WITH THIS ISSUE. THEY THINK CANADA SHOULD STAY TOGETHER BUT HOW IS ANOTHER QUESTION. PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU HAS GAINED IN POPULARITY OVER THE ISSUE, BUT PRAIRIE LIBERALS HAVE NOT SHARED IN THIS WINDFALL. END SUMMARY.

2. SO FAR, LAST WEEK'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON NATIONAL UNITY HAS NOT SPARKED MUCH INTEREST HEREABOUTS. THE PRESS GAVE THE ISSUE LEAD COVERAGE WHEN IT OPENED, BUT LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE NOT EXPRESSED APPROBATION OR OPPOSITION EITHER TO TRUDEAU'S APPROACH OR TO CLARK'S OR BROADBENT'S CRITICISM OF IT. IN A BLAND EDITORIAL, WINNIPEG FREE PRESS COMMENTED: 'ONE THING THAT THE TASK FORCE MAY ACCOMPLISH IS TO BROADEN THE PRESENT DIALOGUE FROM ONE BETWEEN QUEBEC CITY AND OTTAWA TO ONE BETWEEN QUEBEC AND THE OTHER NINE PROVINCES. IF IT CAN DO THIS, IT WILL HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH.'

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 WINNIP 00256 122250Z

3. THIS ABSENCE OF COMPELLING INTEREST IS NOT PARTICULARLY SURPRISING. THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN OTTAWA DON'T OFTEN GRAB AND HOLD FOR LONG THE INTEREST OF PRAIRIE FOLK-- ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. IT'S SUMMER, AND THE PURSUIT OF PURE ENJOYMENT AT THE LAKE OR ON THE GOLF COURSE IS MORE GRIPPING.

4. THOSE WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT CANADIAN UNITY PROBABLY FELT THEY DID THEIR BIT THE WEEK BEFORE FOR CANADA DAY ACTIVITIES. EVEN THOSE MANIFESTATIONS SEEMED LESS THAN WHOLE-HEARTED. IN WINNIPEG, ETHNIC GROUPS HIGH-LIGHTING MANITOBA'S MULTICULTURAL MIX PERFORMED BEFORE SPARSE CROWDS ON THE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING GROUNDS. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM SASKATCHEWAN, THERE WAS A SIMILAR COMMEMORATION IN REGINA WHICH DREW LARGER CROWDS. IN THE NORTHERN MINING TOWN OF FLIN FLON (ON MANITOBA-SASKATCHEWAN BORDER), ABOUT 10,000 PEOPLE TURNED OUT FOR THE ANNUAL TROUT FESTIVAL AND FOR HUDSON BAY MINING AND SMELTING COMPANY'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY. THE UNITY QUESTION WAS ONLY INCIDENTAL. A SPEAKER FROM REGINA REPRESENTING THE COMMITTEE FOR CANADIAN UNITY HELD FORTH FOR A FEW MINUTES WHICH BROUGHT POLITE APPLAUSE FROM THOSE GATHERED BEFORE THEY RETURNED THEIR ATTENTION THE CANOE RACES.

5. IN SHORT, PEOPLE ON THE PRAIRIES STILL ARE NOT SEIZED BY THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL UNITY. THEY SEEM TO THINK IT HAS LITTLE IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON THEM. EVEN IN WINNIPEG, WITH ITS LARGE FRANCO-MANITOBAN COMMUNITY IN ST BONIFACE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND MUCH CONCERN.

6. WHEN ASKED, MOST PEOPLE SAY CANADA SHOULD STAY TOGETHER, BUT THEY DON'T HAVE A CLUE HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, WE DO HEAR LESS FREQUENTLY THAN LAST YEAR DURING THE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 WINNIP 00256 122250Z

AIR TRAFFICE CONTROL STRIKE ABOUT LETTING QUEBECKERS GO THEIR OWN WAY.

7. AMONG LEADERS ON THE PRAIRIES, MANY AGREE WITH THE LOW-KEY APPROACH OF MANITOBA PREMIER ED SCHREYER. WHILE FRONTING A STRONG FEDERALIST LINE, HE HAS SHOWN THAT MANITOBA IS WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH QUEBEC IN STRICTLY LIMITED SPHERES SUCH AS CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES (SEE WINNIPEG A-7). SCHREYER BELIEVES THAT 'TO TURN OUR BACKS ON THEM WOULD ONLY GIVE ADDED MOMENTUM TO THEIR IMPLIED SUGGESTION THAT THEY DON'T HAVE MUCH IN COMMON WITH US ANYWAY.'

8. SIMILAR FEDERALIST SENTIMENTS PREVAIL IN SASKATCHEWAN. THE PROVINCE'S DEPUTY PREMIER RECENTLY PUT IT THIS WAY: 'FOR THE WEST, SEPARATION IS NOT AN OPTION. WE BELIEVE THERE IS A BETTER IDEA THAN THAT. WE BELIEVE WE CAN WORK OUT A FAIRER DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS, WHEREBY WE HAVE A STRONG CENTRALIST GOVERNMENT IN THOSE AREAS OF NATIONAL CONCERN, LIKE ECONOMIC POLICY, AND STRONG PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS IN THOSE AREAS OF PROVINCIAL CONCERN--LIKE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS.'

9. AS A POLITICAL ISSUE, THE UNITY QUESTION HAS CLEARLY HELPED MR. TRUDEA IN THIS PART OF THE PRAIRIES. LITTLE IS HEARD OF JOE CLARK THESE DAYS, AND EXCEPT FOR HIS RECENT NDP CONVENTIONEERING IN WINNIPEG, ED BROADBENT REMAINS AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY. REGARDLESS OF THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY, AND THE FEELING OF WESTERN ALIENATION, TRUDEAU IS SEEN AS THE ONLY MAN TO LEAD CANADA THROUGH ITS TIME OF TROUBLES. WHETHER THAT PERCEPTION WILL TRANSLATE INTO AN INCREASED NUMBER OF LIBERAL MP'S FROM THE PRAIRIES IS DOUBTFUL.

10. FOR CERTAIN, ANY RESURGENT TRUDEAU POPULARITY HAS NOT BENEFITED PROVINCIAL LIBERALS. WITH ONLY THREE SEATS IN THE MANITOBA LEGISLATURE, THEY'LL BE HARD PRESSED TO CONVINCE THOSE WHO WANT A CHANGE IN THE NDP GOVERNMENT THAT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 WINNIP 00256 122250Z

A VOTE FOR A LIBERAL IS NOT WASTED. IN SASKATCHEWAN, WITH THE RECENT CONVERSION TO TORY RANKS OF THE SON OF THE LAST LIBERAL PREMIER (ROSS THATCHER). THE PARTY HAS LOST ITS STATUS AS OFFICIAL OPPOSITION. THERE, TOO, MANY VOTERS SEE THE RECHARGED TORIES AS THE ONLY VIALBE ALTERNATIVE TO ANOTHER FOUR YEARS OF NDP GOVERNMENT.

11. AT THIS POINT, IN SPITE OF IMPASSIONED APPEALS FROM AFAR FOR CANADIANS TO OPEN THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS TO THE CONCERNS OF QUEBECKERS, IT JUST HASN'T HAPPENED. PERHAPS THE ATTENTION OF PRAIRIE PEOPLE HAS BEEN GOTTEN, BUT NATIONAL UNITY STILL IS NOT A PREOCCUPATION BY A LONG SHOT. MOST PEOPLE SIMPLY WISH THE WHOLE PROBLEM WOULD GO AWAY.

HUTSON

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONALISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977WINNIP00256
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770248-0617
Format: TEL
From: WINNIPEG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770764/aaaacedb.tel
Line Count: 150
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d2efe66c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OTTAWA 5944
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1883441
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATIONAL UNITY--STILL NOT A PRAIRIE PREOCCUPATION
TAGS: PGOV, CA
To: OTTAWA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d2efe66c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009